

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /021 W
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R 240545Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8299
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 5258

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, ID
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF JUNIOR MINISTERS

REF: (A) JAKARTA 5216

1. FOLLOWING ARE BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF THE REMAINING
THREE NEW JUNIOR MINISTERS, SWORN IN ON APRIL 22.

2. JUNIOR MINISTER FOR PEOPLE'S HOUSING: DRS. COSMAS
BATUBARA. BATUBARA, WHO CAME TO PUBLIC PROMINENCE AS AN
ANTI-SUKARNO STUDENT LEADER IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE
ABORTIVE 1965 COMMUNIST COUP (GESTAPU), IS ONE OF THE
RISING STARS OF THE GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTY GOLKAR.
HE HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE AND (FOR A GOKAR MAN) RATHER
PROGRESSIVE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND DID AN EXCELLENT JOB
IN A VERY SENSITIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP DURING THE
JUST-COMPLETED MPR, WINNING HIGH MARKS FROM OPPOSITION-
ISTS AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS. HE IS LIKELY TO
DO A GOOD, DOLID JOB IN HIS NEW POSITION WITHOUT
INSTITUTING BOLD INITIATIVES. BATUBARA HAS BEEN A
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FREQUENT, COOPERATIVE AND USEFUL CONTACT FOR THE MISSION.

3. COMAS BATUBARA IS 39 YEARS OLD AND A BATAK. A
JOURNALIST BY TRAINING, HE PLUNGED INTO PRACTICAL
POLITICS IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIVING HIS JOURNALISM
DEGREE AND HAS NEVER WORKED AS A NEWSMAN. HE WAS HEAD
OF THE JAKARTA BRANCH OF THE CATHOLIC STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

AT THE TIME OF GESTAPU AND WAS LATER THE COMPROMISE CHOICE TO HEAD KAMI, THE BROAD-BASED UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZATION WHICH HELPED OVERTHROW SUKARNO. HE HELPED SET UP THE GOLKAR NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE KNPI AND WAS APPOINTED TO GOLKAR'S CENTRAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL IN 1969. HE NOW SERVES AS THE PARTY'S DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING AND PLAYED A KEY MANAGERIAL ROLE IN THE 1977 GOLKAR PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN. HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT SINCE 1971. HE IS MARRIED (TO A JAVANESE) AND IS THE FATHER OF TWO SONS AND TWO DAUGHTERS.

4. JUNIOR MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS: MAJ. DR. ABDUL GAFUR. AN AIR FORCE PHYSICIAN BY TRAINING BUT MORE RECENTLY A POLITICAL PROTEGE OF MINISTER OF INFORMATION ALI MURTOPO, GAFUR FIRST CAME TO PUBLIC ATTENTION AS A POST-GESTAPU STUDENT LEADER. ANOTHER OF THE JUNIOR MINISTERS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH GOLKAR, HE IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE GOLKAR YOUTH ORGANIZATION KNPI AND HAS BEEN THE PARTY'S YOUTH SINCE 1972. HIS CLOSE TIES TO GOLKAR AND MURTOPO SUGGEST HE WILL SPEND MOST OF HIS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERABLE ENERGIES TRYING TO CONTROL AND MANIPULATE THE STUDENT MOVEMENT RATHER THAN SERVING AS A CHANNEL FOR STUDENT INPUT INTO THE GOVERNING PROCESS. WE HAVE HAD LITTLE PAST CONTACT WITH GAFUR.

5. GAFUR IS, AT 39, THE YOUNGEST OF THE JUNIOR MINISTERS
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(A FEW MONTHS JUNIOR TO COSMAS BATUBARA). HE WAS BORN OF MIXED ACEHNESE/MOLUCCAN PARENTS, ATTENDED SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOL IN ACEH AND GRADUATED FROM THE UI MEDICAL SCHOOL IN 1967. WHILE AT UI HE WAS ACTIVE IN STUDENT POLITICS, WAS VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL AND SERVED WITH BATUBARA ON KAMI. HE ENTERED THE MILITARY AFTER GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE, FOR A TIME EDITING AN ARMY-SUPPORTED NEWSPAPER IN SRABAYA, AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY PLUNGED INTO GOLKAR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, MOSTLY YOUTH AND STUDENT ORIENTED. IN 1971 HE WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO SONS.

6. JUNIOR MINISTER FOR THE ROLE OF WOMEN: MRS. LASIYAH SUTANTO. LIKE MOST OBSERVERS, MRS. SUTANTO EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT HER OWN APPOINTMENT, TELLING THE PRESS, "I HEARD THERE WAS ANOTHER CANDIDATE." A RELIABLE SOURCE CLOSE TO THE PALACE SAID SUHARTO HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY SETTLING ON THE CHOICE OF MRS. SUTANTO (WE'RE NOT SURE WHY), AND THIS MAY BE THE PRINCIPAL REASON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE JUNIOR MINISTERS WAS SO LONG DELAYED. YET ANOTHER JUNIOR MINISTER CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH GOLKAR, MRS. SUTANTO HAS BEEN A LONG RECORD OF ACTIVITY IN

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS BUT HER SUBSTANTIVE DUTIES HAVE YET TO BE
DEFINED AND ARE LIKELY TO BE LIMITED. ALREADY THERE IS
GRUMBLING THAT HER APPOINTMENT IS MERE TOKENISM. WE HAVE
HAD LITTLE CONTACT WITH MRS. SUTANTO.

7. MRS. SUTANTO, A 53 YEAR OLD CENTRAL JAVANESE, IS
SOMETHING OF A MINOR FOLK HERO. DURING THE STRUGGLE
AGAINST THE DUTCH, WHILE SHE WAS IN SCHOOL, SHE AND SOME
FRIENDS SET UP A "FOOD STALL" IN A DUTCH-OCCUPIED ZONE WHICH
SERVED AS A CONDUIT FOR INTELLIGENCE AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR THE
INDONESIAN FORCES. SHE WAS TRAINED IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES, GRADUATING FROM JOGJAKARTA'S GADJAH MADA
UNIVERSITY WITH A DEGREE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN 1962.
DURING THE 1950'S AND EARLY 1960'S SHE TAUGHT ENGLISH AND
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FRENCH IN SEVERAL HIGH SCHOOLS ON JAVA, THEN RETURNED TO
GADJAH MADA AS A FACULTY MEMBER IN 1967. IN 1972 SHE
MOVED TO JAKARTA, AS AN ADVISER ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TRAINING IN THE CAPITAL CITY'S SCHOOLS. SHE BECAME ACTIVE IN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JAKARTA 5258

1962 IN THE PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATION OF WHAT IS NOW THE
GOLKAR WOMEN'S GROUP KOWANI AND GRADUALLY MOVED UP

THROUGH THE RANKS, BECOMING KOWANI GENERAL CHIARMAN IN
1974. IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH AND FRENCH, MRS. SUTANTO
ALSO SPEAKS FLUENT GERMAN AND DUTCH. SHE IS MARRIED TO
A TRAFFIC CONTROL ENGINEER WHO HEADS THE BANDUNG,
WEST JAVA, TRAFFIC CONTROL ORGANIZATION. THEY HAVE A
DAUGHTER AND TWO SONS.
MASTERS

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